

HERBERT M. JONES

Interviewee: Herbert M. Jones

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Description

Herbert M. Jones, born July 22, 1914 in Phillipsburg, Missouri, was a founding partner of the Jones Vargas Law Firm. His father, an oil-drilling superintendent, moved the family to Sumatra, Indonesia, when Jones was 11 years old. By 1931, the family was in Las Vegas, Nevada. Jones worked summers in high school and college around the construction of Hoover Dam. He graduated from the University of Missouri in 1940, and was steered to law school at the University of Arizona-Tucson by his brother Clifford's friend, Howard Cannon.

Jones relates an early career path that zigzags throughout the 1940s and '50s. He saw extensive action in the Pacific in World War II that he still would not talk about at the time of his oral history. Jones returned an Army colonel, remained in the reserves, transferred to the U.S. Air Force, redeployed in the Korean action, was appointed staff judge advocate for Nellis Air Force Base, and retired a major. After graduating from law school in 1947, Jones started his career in Las Vegas—first as a deputy district attorney, followed by private practice with his brother Clifford. He describes working the “mud detail” of the divorce trade, and long hours and days—six days a week, 15-16 hours a day. Jones tells stories about traditional law as well as notorious cases, including “British war brides,” and the Krupp Diamond theft. His life reveals much about the history of Nevada gaming and its growth from a local business to a global corporate interest.

Jones speaks fondly of his family and remembers an active social and civic life as Las Vegas grew. He defends his city—Las Vegas—as a town with churches, Boy Scouts, and Rotary Clubs, not the stereotypical “Sin City.” After his death in 2008, his partner, Joe Brown, remembered him as a “model of gentlemanly conduct, humility, exemplary behavior and integrity—a lawyer’s lawyer.”

The oral history interviews with Herbert M. Jones were part of the Nevada Legal Oral History Project, a joint effort of the Nevada Judicial Historical Society, the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society, and the University of Nevada Oral History Program.

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An Oral History Conducted by Patrick Carlton
Edited by Patricia A. Cooper-Smith

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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University of Nevada Oral History Program
Mail Stop 0324
Reno, Nevada 89557
unohp@unr.edu
<http://www.unr.edu/oralhistory>

Nevada Judicial Historical Society
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society
Pasadena, California 91105

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Publication Staff:
Director: Alicia Barber
Production Assistant: Karen Frazier

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PREFACE

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

INTRODUCTION

Herbert Monroe Jones was born July 22, 1914 in Phillipsburg, Missouri. His father, an oil-drilling superintendent, worked for Shell Oil Company. In 1925, Mr. Jones was 11 years old when the family moved to Klulong, in Sumatra, Indonesia, a town he describes as being “carved out of the heart of the jungle.” It was a big change for the Missouri paperboy.

In 1931, serendipity took the family to Las Vegas. The youngest of three children, Mr. Jones worked summers in high school and college at jobs generated by the construction of Boulder (Hoover) Dam. It was the Great Depression. His first job was as a mess hall waiter for a dam concessionaire; he graduated to a “puddler,” and a power hose man—the last two being difficult, dangerous jobs involving the concrete pour of the dam itself. After graduating from the University of Missouri in 1940, he was steered to law school at the University of Arizona-Tucson when his brother’s friend, Howard Cannon, said that he needed to get “some *useful* law.” Arizona, Cannon said, had the best mining and water law instructors in the country.

Mr. Jones’s early career path was not in a straight line, but zigzagged throughout the 1940s and ‘50s. In World War II, Mr. Jones saw extensive action in the Pacific—experiences he still would not talk about at the time of his oral history. In December 1945, he returned home an Army colonel. He remained in the reserves, which resulted in a transfer to the U.S. Air Force, redeployment after law school in the Korean action, advancement to the rank of major, and appointment as staff judge advocate for Nellis Air Force Base.

After graduating from law school in 1947, Mr. Jones started work as a deputy district attorney in Las Vegas, followed by private practice with his brother Clifford. He describes his first years in private practice as working the “mud detail,” a.k.a. the divorce trade. Work was his trademark. Still a staff judge advocate at Nellis, he talks about working at his private practice at night.

The long, hard hours of work continued for numerous years at 15-16 hours a day, six days a week. Still, there was family, and Mr. Jones speaks fondly of his wife and children,

the deaths of his only daughter and his wife, and remarriage. He recalls an active social and civic life as Las Vegas grew.

Mr. Jones is a lively storyteller with war stories about traditional law as well as “British war brides” and the Krupp Diamond theft. He recalls the growth of Nevada gaming from a local business to a global corporate interest, and the “eye in the sky.” He comments on what it means to be an advocate for clients, and he adamantly defends Las Vegas; to him, it is not “Sin City,” but a town of churches, Boy Scouts, and Rotary Clubs.

At the time of Mr. Jones’s oral history interview, he was ninety years old, and enjoying his status as a founder of one of Nevada’s oldest and largest law firms, the Jones Vargas Law Firm. After Mr. Jones’s death in 2008, his partner, Joe Brown, said that Mr. Jones was a “model of gentlemanly conduct, humility, exemplary behavior and integrity—a lawyer’s lawyer.”

For readers who are interested in examining the unaltered records, copies of the recorded interviews are available in the Special Collections department of the UNR Library.

Patrick Carlton conducted this oral history interview with Nevada attorney Herbert M. Jones on August 23, 2004, at Mr. Jones’s office in Las Vegas, Nevada, as part of the Nevada Legal Oral History Project, a joint effort of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society (NJCHS), the Nevada Judicial Historical Society (NJHS), and the UNOHP. Begun in 2001, the project was intended to record the life stories of leading members of Nevada’s legal profession and to educate the public about law and the courts by making those stories widely available through various media.

Members of the boards of NJHS and NJCHS compiled and vetted lists of potential

narrators, ultimately selecting representatives from both the state and federal benches and bars. The UNOHP, under the direction of Tom King and his successor Mary Larson, recommended interviewers, most of whom were professional oral historians, and donated equipment and transcription services. Brad Williams, of NJCHS, coordinated the project from its inception. Susan Southwick, of NJHS, oversaw that group’s participation. Patricia Cooper-Smith completed the copyediting and introductions. Alicia Barber, Director of the UNOHP since 2009, supervised the project’s final publication and dissemination. The project was made possible by a generous challenge grant from the John Ben Snow Memorial Trust, with matching funds provided by the U.S. District Court for Nevada Attorney Admissions Fund, the Washoe County Courthouse Preservation Fund, and the Nevada State Bar. Thanks go to Susan Southwick and the Board of Trustees of NJHS, and to Patrick Carlton, who interviewed Herbert M. Jones.

Patricia A. Cooper-Smith
Carson City, Nevada
May 2013



HERBERT M. JONES
CIRCA 1984

(Courtesy of Jan Jones)

HERBERT M. JONES

Patrick Carlton: This is Patrick Carlton, interviewer. Today is Monday, August 23, 2004. I'm interviewing Mr. Herbert M. Jones, a local attorney in Las Vegas, Nevada, in his office. Mr. Jones, would you please start by giving your full name and the date and place of your birth, please?

Herbert Jones: I am Herbert Monroe Jones. I was born July 22, 1914, in a small town in Missouri called Phillipsburg, Missouri. Phillipsburg was on the railroad which ran between St. Louis and Springfield, Missouri. I can't remember what the name of the railroad was, but it was one of the famous ones, because in those days almost everything went by railroad. My brother and sister were born in the little town of Buffalo, Missouri, which was in Dallas County. They were older than I. My sister was two and a half years older than Cliff, and Cliff was two and a half years older than I. There was always a joke with him that I bragged that I was born in a railroad town, and they were way-out-in-the-country people.

From there I went to a town that my mother and dad moved to, a town about twelve miles away, which is a much larger town called Lebanon, Missouri. Lebanon later was on the famous Highway 66. In those days I don't have any idea what the roads were, and I don't recall the roads very well. I did part of my grammar school in Lebanon and one of my vivid memories of grammar school was riding my horse to school. I must have been about seven, probably in the first or second grade. It was so memorable to me because I was riding with a full gallop down the street, and then he came to a mud puddle and decided he wasn't going to jump, and, of course, I landed on my head. I went over his head. That was, of course, a vivid memory to me—falling off my horse at the ripe, old age of six or seven.

From Lebanon, my dad moved to Long Beach, California, and the family followed him there. He went to work for Shell Oil Company on Signal Hill in Long Beach. Of course, in those days there was not too much money around, so probably at about eight

years of age I started selling newspapers on what they called Atlantic Boulevard, which was next to the ocean down there. I made enough money to buy myself a bicycle, and the next thing that I recall is that I got myself a paper route with my bicycle on Signal Hill. Along about then my father was retained to go to the Dutch East India Islands, which is now under the Malay states or Indonesia. He was going to Sumatra. There was Sumatra, Java, and Borneo, and then a whole bunch of smaller islands, which are now, of course, a nation. But they were at that time ruled by the Dutch, although there was some Spanish in the words in the Malay language, because at one time, I was told, the Spaniards had been in there, also.

After Dad had been there for several months—I don't remember how long—my mother, my brother Cliff, my sister, who was the eldest child, and myself were shipped over by the Shell company to Sumatra. We sailed from Vancouver. Of course, we stopped at Japan and then over to Singapore and then Palembang, which was pronounced with a harsh expression of the English language. That was our port of entry. I must have been about eleven at that time.

So that would have been about 1925?

Yes. From there we went up the two rivers. As I recall—I'm not really sure—but I think the first one was Musi River, and I think the second river was Batahari River. But I think we went probably about fifty miles on one of them and seventy-five miles on the other. I can't recall. I just remember them saying, "Two we call at *pangelon*." *Pangelon* meant the river landing. Then we disembarked at the *pangelon* there and went inland on the road that had been prepared there into a little town called Klulong. Now, *klulong* was the

Malay word for "flying fox," which was those great big bats. The town of Klulong was just carved out of the heart of the jungle. I'm not accurate at this, but I would say it's got to be about a mile across for each way, whatever that diameter would have been. My father was there. He and three other American men were there to teach the rotary type of drilling for oil. The Dutch had found the oil there in that little place and had carved this little town right out of the middle. The only way in the world you could get in there was by river. But they used what they call the old "cable-two drilling," which was up and down, and you put in a baler and got the mud out and so forth. The rotary is the type they use today, which was invented back in those days, and the power-use fishtail bit was just starting in. Their job was to teach the Dutch how to do the rotary rigs and how to drill that way, the modern way.

Your dad was a petroleum engineer?

No, he was a driller. In fact, he was kind of a superintendent.

I see. Tell me your dad's full name.

Burley Monroe Jones. He was born, I think, about 1886. One of his uncles was called Burl, and his other uncle was called Lee, so they just shortened it and called him Burley, with not the same spelling.

Your mother's name was what?

Arlie Mary. Her maiden name is Benton, like the old silver dollar Benton and those Bentons.

My life there in the jungle was very, very fun. They had a tennis court, and some of the Dutch taught my brother and I to play

tennis, and we hunted. My dad was kind of an old-fashioned guy. He started taking me hunting back in the states when I was about seven or eight. I had grown up with a .410 shotgun. Incidentally, my own kids had the same experience, because they all got the .410 and started learning when they were seven or eight, maybe even earlier. But anyway, it was an exciting life in that there were the elements, and there were tigers, and there were alligators and wild boar. My first introduction to a cobra is one of the vivid things I remember. They built us a home, and all of their homes are over eight feet tall on stanchions. There was a kind of a pool. Just as we were moving into the home, we heard this strange racket and ran out to look, and there was a big, old cobra with a big frog in his mouth. The frog was making all the strangest noises, and I can remember it vividly because it was such a strange thing. This is interesting from my standpoint—now that I've had to use a lawn for so many years and spend so much money on watering one—but our yardman's job was to pick every blade of grass. There was never a blade of grass allowed. We had a large, large yard, which still didn't have water, and it was completely bare as this tabletop, and you could see the centipedes and the snakes and everything. That was the reason why we had no blades of grass, which was quite interesting to me, and it still is interesting, I think, to myself.

What about your schooling?

Before we ever left California, my mother got in touch with the California school system, and at that time, apparently, what they had was complete out-of-the-country programs for families like mine. My mother obtained the regular schooling program, and we were educated on the same level by my

mother. One of the men there was a college graduate, and he also helped supervise us just out of the goodness of his heart because we were neighbors. We were educated on the California school system, and when we returned, my brother, my sister, and I went back into exactly the same classes and grade that we would have gone into had we been in America.

They furnished you with all the books and the instructional materials to work with?

Yes, and Mother supervised us. My mother was tougher than.... [laughter] As far as teaching was concerned, we learned, because we did our lessons more religiously than if we had been enrolled in school, because we were right there under her supervision. We'd go out in the jungle and play and piddle around, but, boy, we better be back for the schooling. And as I say, the result was that we never missed a grade when we returned to somewhere.

My sister is Florence Lee Jones Cahlan. She was the first woman journalist. You've read about Florence Lee Jones Cahlan?

Yes.

She was the first woman journalist in the state of Nevada, and there's an awful lot of stuff about her. She had gone as far as she could under this system, and Dad still had some time left on his contract. Dad and Mother decided they couldn't send a girl, a young lady, home, halfway around the world, which is approximately what Sumatra is. So we all came home; my sister, myself, my brother Cliff, and my mother came back to America. We entered in the school at Long Beach to pick up the grades there, and as soon as we got everything oriented into the school system situation, we then moved back to Lebanon.

The reason we had come back to America was that my sister wanted to take journalism, and at that time the University of Missouri had the best journalism school in the world. So we moved back to Lebanon.

How long had you been out there?

I don't recall exactly how long. It was between two and three years. Then we stayed in Lebanon, I think, for one year. Then we moved to Columbia, Missouri, where the University of Missouri is. I'm talking about Mother, Sister, Cliff, and myself. Sister entered the University of Missouri to take her journalism. Then about one year later, I think it was, my dad came back to America and came to Columbia and stayed there, you know, had a vacation there.

It was 1931 when this was happening, and Dad decided to go back to Sumatra. Shell Oil had offered him another contract, so he and Mother were going. We were, of course, all grown now or at least big enough to leave on our own. Mother and Dad started back to Long Beach, which was usually the port of departure. They were going down Highway 66, and they came to Kingman, and Dad was just piddling around, looking at stuff, and he saw a notice on a bulletin board or a paper about how they were going to build a dam over in a little town near Las Vegas, Nevada. He said, "Well, long as we're here, let's just go over there and take a look at that place."

They crossed the Colorado River, because that was before the dam was built, of course. I think at that time old "Big Jim" Cashman had a ferry on the river, and that's the ferry that they came across. They came here to Las Vegas, and Dad looked around, and he said, "Well, I'm just not going back to the jungle. I decided I'm going to stay right here." So Dad and Mother lit here, and this became

our home in 1931. I, of course, came home, because this was now home. This was where my mother and dad were. So did Cliff and Sister.

Sister finished her education at the University of Missouri and got a degree in journalism and came out to Las Vegas. The *Review-Journal* at that time hired her as a reporter. As I say, that's why she's extremely well known as the first woman journalist here in the state, and she had a wonderful experience as a journalist here in Las Vegas. There's an awful lot written about her, all kinds of stuff written about Sister.

But anyway, the Depression had started, and when I graduated from high school, my brother Cliff had already graduated from high school, and Sister had graduated from college, so I went to work. I got a job out at Boulder City working for the Anderson Brothers Mess Hall. That was a very famous company at that time. They went all over the country as a company that was feeding workers at construction projects, and it was a big, big company. I got a job as a waiter in the mess hall. Incidentally, it was probably one of the toughest jobs I've ever had, because there were probably around five thousand people working on the dam, and this was a great, great, big mess hall. It was in the heart of the Depression, and everybody was hungry. One man could eat five or six eggs and six or eight pieces of bacon and five or six pieces of toast. I mean, you just worked yourself to death trying to feed those people. I worked there as a waiter. My brother was working in the mess hall, but he was in the sandwich department. You had breakfast, and then you took a prepared lunch in a box to go down on the dam. He was in the sandwich department.

Was your dad on staff someplace there, also?

No, he wasn't working on the dam at that time. In fact, he had built him a service station out at what is now Pittman, and he owned some property there in Pittman.

Cliff got a job as what we call a "bell punk," and I don't know what the technical name was that the old construction men called it. If you've ever been out on Boulder Dam or know about the history, you know those big buckets that go over and dump the concrete and pick it up. He was a "high-line operator," what we call a "bell punk," because they bring the big buckets over, dump the concrete, and pick them up, go back, get another, and do all kinds of things with those big high lines.

When he went down on the job, I went down and got a job as a "puddler." A puddler was a person who wore the rubber boots. If you remember when you went out there, the dam is built with five-foot forms. Everything was five-foot. I mean, this was lowered, then another, and then another. But everything had a five-foot form, and the big buckets would come in and dump the concrete, and then it would kind of spread out when they moved their things. It opened up. But then the puddlers would go in and stomp it into the corners and be sure it's all smoothed out. Later, we all smoothed it even more so, but the main thing was to puddle it into the corners. I worked that way as a puddler. That was one of the jobs I had.

I'd work from June until September, and then I'd go to college. By that time we pretty well knew people, so when I would come back after having been in college for a year, why, I'd get another job. In my next job I actually was dragging a hose for a power hose man. When I was explaining about the forms—they had to be cleaner than those walls—I mean, absolutely clean. What they had was power hoses and water, and these guns were shaped so that they had a nozzle that went out like

this, and then the end came in, and you had a power hose coming in from this way and a water hose coming in that way and another thing going down where it hooked into a piece of a thing that could suck sand out. I got a job dragging a hose for a power hose man. These power hose people would have to clean these forms until they were completely, absolutely clean.

I had learned pretty quick down here on the dam that these old hard-rock miners and these construction guys didn't like smart-alecky, young, college guys, and I had learned—I think a lot of kids probably should have learned it earlier, too—to keep your mouth shut and be respectful to older people. Having learned that, I had asked my boss if I could play with his gun. We had twenty minutes to eat the box lunches. Incidentally, a little aside, I don't think you ever realize that most people in those days had tailor-made cigarettes, but we never bought them because when we were on the job, we had the twenty minutes, and that was it. We learned to roll our own, because if you used the tailor-made, all you had to do is just take it out and light it, and that took one second. Rolling your own took about ten or fifteen seconds, and you got a big break. You learned to roll your own cigarettes, and you got good at it. Anyway, Mr. Walker, who was the boss of my team, allowed me, while he was having lunch, to play with his gun, and I learned to use it. He'd say, "You can't do this or do that," you know. He was watching me. I learned to be a power hose man because of Mr. Walker.

My next job was power hose man. Now, what you did, if you remember seeing the things down there, these things cured for days and days, and they ran ice water through everything. So, when we would move into a form, it'd be real cured. It would be a whole one, but it would be dirty. We would wash it

down and take off every grain of sand. Every loose grain of sand was off those walls and off that thing, and, of course, you build up, and we would run all that debris over into the next one, and then we would sandblast. This thing that came down out of your gun went into a sand bucket. You sandblasted it again, the walls and the surface, and again washed it till there was not one loose grain of sand on it. That's why if people ask you, what the hell that thing built, I can tell you it's built. [laughter] But anyway, that was my next job.

Next time when I went to work, after I'd been away to school for the year or so, I got a job with Babcock and Wilcox, which was the big company that made the steel, one of those great big steel interlines for things. I got a job running an electric broach, which was one of the first *portable* electric broaches they'd ever had. They'd had electric broaches before, but not one that you could put inside a fifty-foot piece of steel. How that would work was, we would be inside the piece of steel, and there'd be a man outside the steel with a corking gun in between the steel and the wall, because the walls were bigger than the steel. We would take this great big electric ram, at first full of a bill that had been run through the holes. We'd match these holes, but then he would put the butt of the bit in through these holes, and I would run up with the ram and pull it through to where there was ten-thousandth of an inch perfect. Then we'd take the bit off and ram a great big plug through there, and on the other side he would cork it—in other words, spread it so that it was perfect. That's the way those all worked, if you wondered how those big pipes were all connected together, because they were, you know, down through the upper Arizona and the other tunnels. This was in the upper Arizona, where I was. That's the way they were put together so that they're

absolutely there forever. I had that job until I went away to school—or until the job ran out.

Now, you had decided to go to school in Missouri. Why did you decide to go there?

Well, because my brother and my sister had both graduated from there. That was my home state from the standpoint of my brother and sister being there. Cliff graduated from law school there. My sister graduated from journalism school there. So, I would go back there to school. In fact, you know, all the kids were there. The folks were here. Then we would come home in the summertime.

What was your academic major? What did you study while you were Missouri?

I had a history and general class, whatever it says up there—Bachelor of Arts. But I was preparing to go into law school. Then, when the job ran out, I had to get other work. Then I went to law school in the fall. I had graduated from University of Missouri, and I went to law school at University of Arizona at Tucson—that was the only university in Arizona at that time. Now they have two or three down there, but that was the University of Arizona at Tucson, and that was the only one then.

Here's the reason I went to Arizona. Everybody around here in those days rodeoed. We all rode horses and did a lot of horseback riding, and they had little rodeos all over—up in St. George, in Cedar City, in Alamo, in Las Vegas, and around. My brother and Howard Cannon got to be very close friends. Howard was practicing law in St. George, and Cliff, of course, was practicing law here. Howard asked Cliff where I was going to school, and Cliff said, "Well, I'll guess he's going to go back to the University of Missouri."

Howard said, "Absolutely not! He's going to University of Arizona!" He said, "You know, Missouri doesn't have any water rights or any mining law. Arizona has probably the best mining law man." In those days, Phelps Dodge was very big in Arizona, and he said, "Arizona has one of the greatest mining law and water rights instructors in the country, a fellow by the name of Chester Smith." He said, "He's going to Arizona, where he can get some *useful* law." That's why I entered the University of Arizona in 1940.

In the meantime, my brother went into artillery at the University of Missouri ROTC and insisted on me going into artillery. Being stubborn, I said, "No, I'm going into infantry—just because." [laughter] So I went in the infantry. Big mistake. We both got commissions as reserve officers, and I did my cadet work out at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, which is the old cavalry post, if you remember.

When I got to Arizona, I was able to get in from the fall of 1940 to December 7, 1941, in law school. As I say, this same Chester Smith was a wonderful guy and had been a second lieutenant in World War I and was a very, very wonderful American, which I like. My Americans I *really* love, and loyal Americans I really love, and he was one of them.

When December 7 came along, they issued both mine and my brother's orders. I heard about him, but I knew about my own. They issued me to active duty, and it looked like I was going to lose a semester. Well, I was supposed to report in late December or early January, but old Chester went around to all my professors, he being one of them, and said, "Now, I know you've got your exams all written out. You prepare them ahead of time. I want your exams. I'll proctor Herb Jones down in my basement," where he had a game room down there. He gathered up all

my exams for all my courses, and for several days, for hours and hours, I sat down in his basement and took my exams for each one of my classes. And it ended up that way. I had my third semester of law school by having Chester Smith, being such a wonderful man, and being concerned that I was going away to war, because obviously I was going away to war.

December 7 said, "This is it!" if you remember.

I came home about the time they were giving exams back in Arizona [laughter] and reported down to March Airfield—my brother was ordered the same place—just to have our physicals. We went down there both of us together and had our physicals, and he went his way somewhere back East; I went to Fort Lewis up in the state of Washington. We called it "Swamp East," because it always rained in Washington! [laughter] I reported in there, and it was wet. It rained. This Nevada boy, who was used to sunlight—one of the memorable things in my reporting to Washington was the fact that for twenty-eight days it rained, and I didn't see the sun, and I remember it, you know. Talk about depressed! Wonderful, beautiful country! Just absolutely chlorophyll green! *Beautiful* everywhere, except no sun. [laughter] And this Nevada boy was used to seeing that sunlight. Finally it came out for a few minutes on the twenty-eighth day.

Were you at Fort Lewis or another post up there?

Fort Lewis. Across the street was what they called "Swamp Murray." It was just a camp over there. I think probably I've talked about the Utah fort where I did some cadet work up there during one of these years. But

anyway, that was my introduction to the state of Washington.

I went ahead and went overseas. I am very reluctant to discuss the war. I sailed—I think we were the first outfit out of the continental United States—to Hawaii, and that was March 10 of 1942. I returned on December 18, 1945, and I saw action in the Pacific. I won't discuss it because it gets me, like all old soldiers, I guess. Were you ever a soldier, ever in actual combat? If you were, I don't think you will ever discuss it with anybody.

What outfit were you assigned to?

I was in the Twenty-Seventh Division. As I say, I don't discuss that because I just have very, very bad memories of that. My sister wanted to write a history of me when I came back from war, and there was just no way I could discuss it—and still can't—without getting upset. I think most combat people are reluctant to talk about it.

You were an infantry officer, so you probably would have been, what, a platoon leader in that company?

Well, yes. Remember, I was only a second lieutenant at the time when I was called in. But that was my job, was a platoon leader when I first went in, yes. I get back, what, over four years later. December 18, 1945, is when I was returned to the United States.

By then you would have been what, a captain or a major?

I can't remember. I think I was a captain—either a captain or a major at that time—but I stayed in the reserves. Along about 1950, I guess, it was my turn to teach the reserves—everybody had to take a turn. The lesson for

the month was the old Stevenfore Church and the railroad tracks and all the old conventional signs—we called it “conventional sign.” I was very angry about that because that was about the time when that hand-carried gun came out, which was an artillery piece that two men could carry. One could carry it, and the other the ammunition, and it was a new gun that had come out, similar to a bazooka, only better.

Did you get the gun?

I had heard about this particular weapon that we knew nothing about; it was a brand new weapon. I got angry, and I wrote the war department, and I told them that Nellis Air Force Base was out here, and that I thought probably I would be more benefit to the United States troops if I were transferred from the infantry into the air force, never thinking they would do it. I never thought that they would transfer an amphibious troop commander into the air force, but sure enough, they did. They transferred me into what they called the “mobilization assignment,” and I was mobilized out from that. [laughter] In those days, after World War II, you had to have points. Overseas you got so many points for being wounded and so many for everything. I had so many points that if I had stayed in the army, there was no way in the world I could ever get me back in. But when they put me in the mobilization assignment, I was mobilized, and they called me in for the Korean War.

And you were what at this point—probably a major?

Yes, I'm pretty sure a major, which was kind of a shock to me. When I was in the army, you know, a major was a field-grade officer, really due the respect. When I got to be an

air force officer as a major, you were nothing! [laughter] Anyway, I was just teasing about that, because that's pretty well true.

Anyway, I was called to active duty for the Korean War and went in there in 1951 for twenty-one months. After nineteen months they were winning the war, and they could let us go ahead and get out. They offered me an out, but I said, "No way! I owe you twenty-one, and I'm staying in it, because I'm not about to have you say, 'Hey, you owe me two months. Come in.'"

Oh, well, as I say, in the army, you know, you're a field-grade officer. Hell, you're somebody big. But they were a dime a dozen in the air force. Well, anyway, I served my twenty-one months, and then I stayed in the reserve and did my fifty points a year. Fortunately, I apparently made a good record, because I went on up to full colonel. I'm a full colonel, retired, and finally got the respect. If I came into an airport, the officer of the day had to come out and meet my plane. Now, finally, after a full colonel, you got a little respect. [laughter]

Where did they assign you during the Korean War?

I was assigned to Nellis, because I went in as an intelligence officer, and immediately you are reassigned as a staff judge advocate. I ended up and served under other staff judge advocates, and before my time was out, I ended up as *the* staff judge advocate at Nellis Air Force Base.

So you served as staff judge advocate for your full tour while you were on active duty in the Korean War.

Yes. As either an assistant staff judge advocate, or *the* staff judge advocate at Nellis,

and I ended up with the twenty-one months. Then I came back to practice law.

Well, now, when the Second World War ended, and you came off active duty, you went back to law school full time then?

Oh, yes. As I told you, December 18, I came home, and I had four months of accumulated time. I was on full pay as an army officer. In January, when the session started for 1946, I entered the January semester and was still in the army, of course, because I was still on the four months accrued leave, and I did that semester. Then Arizona was wonderful. They were really great. We were all coming back—every one of us who were still around. They put a full session, full semester summer school on for us that year, and we took the full semester—accelerated, of course—the same number of hours you had to spend in a regular semester. I got that semester in, and then I entered the September semester of 1946. I finished my degree in January of 1947, came home, and got a job as a deputy district attorney.

At that time there were three of us as soon as I was admitted, and I was admitted in March or April of 1947. We had a district attorney, who was named Bob Jones—no relative. The other deputy district attorney was a fellow by the name of Harry Claiborne, and the other district deputy was myself. That was in 1947. I served about a year and a half, maybe or more. I wanted to get out of the DA's office because I didn't like prosecuting. I found out that I started carrying an attitude that I didn't believe anybody, not even my mother. I mean, I was becoming a prosecutor, and that wasn't me, as a prosecutor.

I went in my brother's law firm of Jones, Wiener, and Jones. The Jones was my brother, Cliff. Wiener was Louis Wiener.

And Bob Jones, who was the DA, was the other partner. I went to work for them as an associate member. A fellow by name of Judge Foley, Roger Foley, replaced me. Roger was practicing law up in Reno at the time; Roger came down here and replaced me in the DA's office, and I went into private practice. That would have been probably 1949 or 1950. For a time, I kind of stayed around a little bit over in the DA's just to kind of help out for a while, but I didn't have the title. Roger had the title.

When you first joined the firm as an associate, what kinds of duties were you assigned? What were your responsibilities?

Well! [laughter] Let me explain something about those days. I was doing all kinds of trial work, but very limited at that time. But in those days—and the old-timers will tell you this—Reno was a divorce mill, and being kind of the mud detail—I had another name for it—the junior had to take all divorces. I would go into court every day. Sometimes I would have five or six or seven divorces that they had handed me—either Cliff or Louis or Bob or somebody had given to me. That was the mud detail. The other guys, these old guys, were all practitioners. They didn't want to be bothered with that stuff, and the young guy had to do it, and there was a lot of it in those days. I mean, this was a real divorce mill. But then I did other things. I don't specifically remember what I did.

You practiced then for a year or so until called to active duty for Korea. Were you able to continue with some of your law duties while you were also at Nellis?

Yes, because most of us were on active duty, and we went out there about six o'clock in the morning. I can't remember the times,

but you did a full day's work, and then, of course, I'd come back to my office and continue some of my cases, because I kept my office, and I was still an associate of Jones, Wiener, and Jones. I was able to continue the practice, not all of it, but some of it. I had to limit it, of course, because I didn't have all day long. But I was able to do that, not always, but sometimes I could take an appointment or do something. I couldn't practice law in the courts. Whatever I did was office work, nothing else. I never went to court.

Once you came off active duty and were fully employed again with the firm, what would your working days have been like? What would an average day have been like, if there was such a thing?

Well, of course, you've got to remember, this was a different time. In those days, all lawyers worked—at least our firm and I did—at least fifteen, sixteen hours a days. You worked Monday through Saturday, all day long Saturday. It was a number of years later that we started having half days; we would work only till noon on Saturday. I don't remember the dates on this. Then, of course, later—and I don't know when it started—we only worked Monday through Friday. But in the early days you worked seven days a week.

We didn't have any air conditioning in the old courthouse. A very famous attorney and probably what I would call the dean of the law practice here was a fellow by the name of Leo McNamee, and Leo was the dean of all of us. What we would do, we would watch Leo come down. His home was on Fremont Street between Fourth and Fifth, as I recall. He'd walk down the street, and when he came in with no coat on, no jacket, that was a word that we could all come to court, because, as

I say, he was the most important lawyer in town, as far as I was concerned, at that time. If Leo came in without a jacket, why, everybody could come into court. We would watch Leo, and at the end of September, when he started coming down the road in his jacket, everybody started coming down the road in their jacket. I mean, it was just something. Now, whether anybody else will tell you that story, I don't know. This was a rule I learned, and that's the one I abided by. Whether the other old lawyers had the same rule, I don't know, but I'm sure they did. I must have been told by some of the older lawyers that this is the way it was.

But anyway, there was no air conditioning, and in those days, early on, we only had *two* judges. We had Judge McNamee, which is a brother of Leo, and then we had Judge Henderson, who was the other judge.

Tell me where your offices were located in those days, the offices of Jones, Wiener, and Jones.

Well, in those days we only had the one courthouse, and that was in a square downtown, actually between Second and Third Street. I think that's right. Then, when I left the DA's office, the Jones, Wiener, and Jones law firm was over what was then the Pioneer Club. Now, the Pioneer Club had been, many, many years before, a dry goods store, actually kind of a department store. Then these guys came in and built the Pioneer Club, and our firm was above that. At the corner of Fremont and Third Street there was a jewelry store, and we later had our office upstairs over the jewelry store. There were quite a few people, and that was a pretty big building. Mike Hines had his office up there, and two or three other lawyers. On the corner of Third Street and Fremont was a restaurant called the Melody Lane, and the lawyers used

to gather there in the morning for coffee. We were in that location for a number of years; I can't remember how many years. Louis Wiener's mother owned a lot on the corner of Fifth Street, and, let's see, I can't remember the other street. But anyway, the Patio Flower Shop is below. They built an office building there and made the offices for the Jones, Wiener, and Jones firm upstairs over what was the Patio Flower Shop, which is the one who leased that as soon as it was built. My office was there for a number of years.

Then when I was working, the firm broke up. Louie and myself and Cliff had a very loose kind of association. We were all in the same office, but I just call it a loose association. Well, it kind of broke up, and I was working very hard, and I finally took a vacation—I hadn't had one for several years—and took my family down to Del Mar, California. I took a week or two off, which was a long time for me in those days. While I was there, my brother Cliff got together with Mel Close and said, "Mel, my brother, Herb, is really, really working himself to death. I want to form another firm, get some of you young guys." These are all young guys, and he said, "While he's gone, I'm going to form a firm. It's going to be Jones, Jones, Close, Bilbray and Kaufman."

When I got back, he said, "Well, I put you in a firm."

I said, "Yes. You must be crazy!" He said, "Look. You're going to kill yourself. I don't care how much money you're making. You can't do this. You're working sixteen, eighteen hours every day, and this is the first vacation you've had in all these years." So he says, "I put a stop to it."

Well, I couldn't get mad because he was thinking of me, not himself, because it didn't make any difference to him. That's how the new firm started, and we moved into what was then the First National Bank Building.

That was around 1970 or 1972, something like that.

I see. So you were now a partner in this firm?

We formed a partnership, yes. Or he did! [laughter] But, of course, he was the senior partner, but I was actually the senior partner, because I worked harder than anybody else. We were there for a number of years.

Now, Mr. Jones, when we were last talking, you had taken me through much of your early life, and we had begun to talk about your legal practice, but one of the things we did not talk about was your marriage and family, and I wonder if you could talk a little about how you met your wife, and tell about your children and your married life.

Well, fine. I'll be delighted to do so. Basically, being, as you know, ninety years old, I have kind of an unusual background in that my grandfather, my mother's father, fought in the War Between the States. I mean, there are not many people alive today who have had a grandfather who fought in that particular war. I thought that might be of interest because, you know, it's historical.

Could you tell us what unit he was with?

Oh, well, actually, that's another interesting situation. My grandfather fought on the Union side, and his brothers fought on the Southern side. I'm going back to what I've been told by my mother in a lot of things, but apparently my grandfather believed in the preservation of the Union, and, of course, his brothers, being Southerners or having Southern feelings, fought on the South. One of my early recollections of my grandfather and one of his brothers was these two old

guys in their eighties sitting under a great big elm tree there in Lebanon, Missouri. In those days I guess they all had false teeth, so they would cut their apples and then scrape the apples, because they couldn't bite into them. I can remember that for some reason or other as a young child. And those two old characters—you'd go by, and you'd hear them still fighting the war. They'd be still arguing about the North and the South and the war, which is a strange recollection, but it's one that I have, even back of my ancient age, my own self.

Then, apparently my family on my mother's side came into Laclede County, Missouri; the best information I have is around 1821 and 1823 or 1824, or something like that. My father's side came into Dallas County, of which the county seat is Buffalo, Missouri, and they came in, I guess, around the same time in 1823 or 1825, or something like that. My recollection is just what I've been told, so I'm not real sure of the authentic dates, but it was in the early 1820s, and they settled in that area. How I happened to still be the grandchild of Civil War folks—they called it the War Between the States then—was that my grandfather Benton, which was my mother's father, had about five or six, maybe seven children, and my mother was the next to last child, so he was at least in his forties or more when my mother was born.

My father, as I said, lived over in Dallas County, and my mother in Laclede County, but my dad was courting my mother, and those were the days of the horses and buggies. When Mother moved over to Dallas County after their marriage, she would be driving the old horse and buggy into town or somewhere, and she would tell this story and get a big kick out of it. The old horse would come up to a kind of a place where there was a little alley built back into some kind of an enclosed area

in the woods. The old horse would come up to that place, and he'd turn in and stop. [laughter] Mother always laughed and told us, "Well, I knew what your father was doing back in those days in that wood." [laughter] But anyway, that's a little joke, but it's indicative of us people who had a favorite parking place when we were courting. But it's good to find out that even the old horses knew about it in those days.

Anyway, when I was born there were three children: my sister, Florence Lee Jones, and my brother, Clifford Aaron Jones, and myself. Then my sister married Johnny Cahlan, who was with the *Review-Journal*, and that's why she also worked for the *Review-Journal* here in Las Vegas, Nevada.

My brother, of course, was a graduate from University of Missouri Law School. He had taken kind of an unusual situation. In those days you could take the bar if you had so many semesters of law. While he was still in undergraduate school, he'd taken some law courses. So the middle of his senior year he came out here and got up to Carson City, took the bar, and passed the bar. That was in 1937, and he went back to school to graduate from law school and, as I say, was admitted in 1937.

Then I came. I think I've already told you my history as far as my going to University of Arizona because of my brother Cliff's relationship with Senator Howard Cannon and his recommendation that I go there. I came home. The girl that I married, I had met at the University of Missouri. Her name was Sarah Jane Sanders. Her father was at that time the general manager of Standard Oil Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which was the producing company for Standard Oil of Indiana. She was going to University of Missouri, and we met there. I, of course, didn't have money enough to get married, so we were engaged all the time that I was in law

school before the war. Then she came to San Francisco and insisted we get married, but not knowing what war was going to be like, I said, "No, we're not going to be married, because I may come back paraplegic or something, if I come back at all." We were engaged for about seven years—all during the war, between the law school and war, and she waited for me. We were married after the war while I was then at the University of Arizona. As I told you, I went back to the university to go to law school in 1946. I went back to Tulsa and was married that year in her mother and dad's home, and then she came back to university at Tucson with me for the balance of that year until January of 1947, when I finished my law degree, and we came home.

My daughter Blake was born soon after we got back home. From that marriage I had Blake, who was the first one. Then my next child was Stephen. My next child was Herbert Monroe Jones Jr., but he was known as "Bart," and still is known as Bart, because his mother called me "Herb," and she didn't want to call him "Herbie," so she came up with "Bart." I don't know where she picked it up. Then my next son was Randall, Jon Randall, now known as J. Randall, and my next child was Mark Merrill Jones. He was the baby; he was the last child. Those children grew up. My daughter, well, got married to a young guy who was at the university, and after he graduated, he was going to be a lawyer, and he was admitted to law school at San Diego.

They had a very tragic situation there. On their way to San Diego, Blake, my daughter, was driving, and her husband was sleeping in the back seat. Apparently, she went to sleep and went across the road. Both of them were killed. They ran into a man coming the other way, and he was also killed. So that's the reason I lost my daughter.

My sons, Steve and Bart, are builders here in Las Vegas. They were awarded the American Homeowners Association "Home of the Year," which they built here in Las Vegas. It was, I guess, a marvelous project.

Jon Randall is an attorney and was at one time selected the "Trial Lawyer of the Year" a number of years ago. The other son, Mark, is an attorney. I have one boy who was graduated as an architect, but I think he's going into the building trades. I have another who is at the present time in Bangkok just going around, seeing the world. He just graduated year before last, and then he went down and spent a year in South America working for free and just seeing the country, working hard for Jesus and things of that nature, doing that type of work. He came home, and he decided he wanted to go to Bangkok, so he's over in Bangkok right now doing the same thing. When he comes home, he's going to go to work in one of his mother's businesses, I guess.

Then I have a stepson, Brian Sorenson. After my wife passed away in 1972, I got married, just a few years later, and I have a stepson who is a CPA and works for the government out at Boulder City. That pretty well takes care of my family.

Your second wife's name is what?

Her maiden name was Fitzgerald. Her first name is Janet. She came from a large family and has a sister here and sisters back in South Dakota and sisters in Kansas City and sisters in Phoenix. We've been married twenty-some years, so we've been married a long time. I think it's around twenty-seven years we've been married.

Now we've covered some information about your family life, sir. I wonder if we could shift

now and go back to your practice of the law. I was trying to get an understanding of how you spent your time. You said last time that you had done a lot of divorce work in your early years, but then in something I was reading about you, it says that you were involved in "planning law" at one time.

I've done a lot of planning in the latter part of the years. When I say "planning," I mean that I appeared before the planning commission and the county commissioners, because I was retained by developers. I would take their projects to the planning commission and to the county commissioners to get their projects approved. I did a lot of that.

Early in my practice, there were probably two, maybe three, outstanding cases that were, I would say, of national importance. One of them was a trial involving Titanium Metals of America, which at that time I represented locally. They had their headquarters back East, of course, but I'm talking about locally. They used a furnace. You know, they're not a metal; they're a conglomerate type of metal. They have this marvelous, big, big furnace that they use, and everything that is used has to go through that big furnace. Westinghouse came along and claimed that they had a patent on this, and this particular type of furnace is used throughout all types of industries that use large, large furnaces. This was, of course, a world-important case, but being the local attorney for the company, they wanted me to be sure that I was extremely active in that particular case, because it was going to be tried locally in front of a federal judge. The people from the headquarters of Titanium Metals hired an expert, a top, top patent lawyer that came in to actually do the work. I was there because I knew what the judges were like and knew the courtroom

and court procedures in Nevada, and so I was involved in this particular case. It was one, as I say, of national, national importance, because if Westinghouse had won, it would have been billions and billions of dollars that everybody would have had to kick in for years and years—for the rest of time—for these furnaces. It turned out, and we proved over the years, that that particular furnace was invented by the federal government and used for the first atomic submarine back in 1951, 1949, or something. But anyway, it ended up they did not have the exclusive patent because the federal government had invented it. That was my biggest case of that nature.

I think the other most important world case that made international news was when I was doing my reserve work out at the Nellis Air Force Base, and, of course, I went out there all the time. I had to get my fifty points, which you're familiar with, so I was there frequently, and I was well known on the base. You know, normally, you're reluctant to talk about a case, but this case, I was told, ended up being publicized in London, and it was called the "British war bride" case. At that time I was still working as an associate attorney for Jones, Wiener, and Jones, and we also had a young lawyer in there, with the name of David Goldwater. David was an excellent trial lawyer. Well, they came to me from out at Nellis and asked if I would take this case *pro bono* to defend this girl, Alice White. She had two small children at the time and was very pregnant. I said, "Of course, I will."

I went out and looked over the place. It was a kind of a strange, strange case, because this man was a very, very bad man. He was a real drunk—her husband—and he would beat her, and then when there were some complaints by the neighbors, why, he claimed that she fell down the stairs from their apartment, because she'd be all beaten up. This particular night he

came in as drunk as could be and said, "When I wake up, I'm going to kill you and the kids." He said, "I'm really mad." He was just raving mad.

When he passed out on the bed, Alice White went in the closet and got a shotgun and put it up to his head and pulled the trigger, and, of course, she was charged with murder.

Dave and I defended Alice. David came up with the theory, which we, of course, kicked around the whole firm. I mean, everybody in the firm was involved with it in one way or the other, but the actual trial was Dave and I. It was decided that we come up with a defense of continuing fear, because she hadn't killed him when he woke up. He was going to, well, kill her and the kids. It was the first such case, I think. Since that time there have been cases on that particular theory. But this was in 1951, 1952, or something, really early, you know, and she was acquitted and found innocent on the basis that it was self-defense. That was one of the famous criminal cases. The other was a civil case.

The rest of my practice was routine. I was the general counsel for what was at that time the Bank of Las Vegas, later the Valley Bank, and then after I was no longer on the board, it was the Bank of America. I did work for Titanium Metals. I did a lot of gaming work, representing different hotels over the years, and so I had to know gaming law, and the usual corporate law. Once in a while I did trial work. My practice was basically planning over the years, and towards the end of my practice, representing clients in front of planning commissioners.

One other case might be of interest because it's a famous criminal case. There was a lady who came here from Germany as the wife of a man named Krupp. Krupp was the famous manufacturer of arms in Germany—

the biggest arms manufacturer. During their marriage she was a beautiful, beautiful woman. Even in middle-age, she was still a gorgeous woman. He, during their marriage, had given her the Krupp diamond. Now, the Krupp diamond was a pear-shaped diamond and, at that time, was the most famous pear-shaped diamond in the world. There were others, like the Hope, and some of the others, but there was none like the Krupp diamond. In those days all lawyers who were admitted to federal court, had to take their turn doing *pro bono* work. They didn't get paid in those days. When it came your turn, you were called in.

Mrs. Krupp had a ranch out southwest of town, and I guess five fellows came here and cased the place for a number of weeks, because they were strictly professionals—I mean, really knew what they were doing. One morning they came in at breakfast time and tied her up and took the Krupp diamond. That's the only thing they wanted, was the Krupp diamond. All her other stuff they weren't bothered with, or if they did, I don't recall anything else they stole, but I don't think they stole anything except the Krupp diamond. Of course, before anybody found them, they were long gone. It was weeks and weeks before anything happened, because it *absolutely* was a perfect crime, as far as the name was concerned.

I don't know what happened, but whatever arrangement they had made to get rid of the Krupp diamond probably failed them. Now they had this famous, famous diamond, and they couldn't do anything with it! [laughter] They went to New York to try to fence it to some New York fence, and, of course, he told the FBI immediately, and they were all arrested.

Then we were appointed—myself and Harry Claiborne and three or four other

guys—I forget who all was appointed, but I do remember me and Harry and three other lawyers. I can't remember who was in there. Incidentally, this hand held the Krupp diamond, hot, little hand. [laughter] We passed the evidence around, of course. But we defended these five people, the five lawyers here in Las Vegas, and, of course, we lost because there was no question about their being the guilty parties after they were the only ones who ended up with the Krupp diamond. So that is kind of a famous case that I participated in.

In those days, the lawyers had to do everything. They had the trial work; they had to do divorce work; they had to do corporate law. You know, you had to do it all. Now, of course, you have specialists in your firms, and almost everything is specialized. But in those days you just practiced law. [laughter] You got the books out, and you studied, and you worked fourteen, fifteen hours a day. If you didn't know the subject, you'd better learn it, you know. That's the way the practice of law was in those days.

Did you ever hear what happened to the Krupp diamond, whatever became of it?

Oh, it was given back to Mrs. Krupp, of course, after years. She ended up with her diamond. There was no question about it. The old man, I'm sure, wanted it back, because the Krupp diamond had been in the Krupp family for many years, but, of course, she got it back, because it was her property. He had given it to her during their marriage, and I guess she'd had it for a long time. But she did get divorced from Krupp, yes, here in Las Vegas.

In one of the documents I was examining, it talked about your working in zoning law,

in addition to planning. Is that related to planning?

Yes. Well, that's the same thing. That's the planning. If you're not zoned, you come in to the planning commission. If you want to build apartments, and you're in an area of single-family dwellings, why, you have to go in and see if you can convince the commission that this project would fit in that area without upsetting all the rules of the planning. See, the entire community is all planned out in different types of things. Like you have ranch estates right in the middle of Las Vegas. Are you familiar with the Rancho Circle—you know where that is? That's on Rancho Drive, actually between Oakey and.... You can have horses in there. I mean, that's ranch estate property. You know, it was always ranch estate property. But it was back to the days when it was ranch estate to start with. Everything is zoned here. Apartments—these are all zoned. The hotels are on hotel zones, and so forth.

When you talk about the practice of "gaming law," what kinds of issues would be raised in that practice?

Well, the primary issue that you would be involved with was with the licensing of different people. That's one of the main things, and, of course, I was very much involved when they wanted to change the law so that you could have corporate gaming. I was one of the committeemen; there were several of us who were on that committee, who worked on the laws that had to be passed. We had to legislatively change the laws, so you could have corporate gaming. I was very much involved with that.

But most of the practice would be situations involving whether they were

committing any breaches of the gaming laws. If you had a new client that wanted to be licensed for gaming, then you went before the gaming authorities. That was primarily what it was all about, and probably that's primarily what it still is. If you have certain matters, such as you have very intricate types of reporting of your gaming, of your financing, then all that's done by rules. Everything is done by rules. If you were maybe a little bit different, why, something that you didn't report right or not the way they wanted it, then you got called up, and you had to go in and bring in your accountants and have them explain why you did it that way, and that you didn't violate the law or didn't intend to violate the law, or cheating, or anything of that nature. It was very, very interesting in those days.

One of things I would like to mention is that we had what we called the "eyes in the sky" in those days. I don't know whether you know what an "eye in the sky" is. But over every gaming area in the casinos—the whole thing, slots, everything—there was a walkway up above, and you had people who were walking up and down auditing to be darn sure that there was no cheating, and nothing was going on wrong. That was universal. Now if you go into one of these hotels, everything is done by computer. But anyway, in those days, everything was done in the eye in the sky. Contrary to what the opinion was that these people were checking to be darned sure that you didn't cheat the house, actually, one of the things they were being darned sure of was that *they* didn't cheat the patron. If you have a million-dollar or a multimillion-dollar license, and you catch someone cheating, you get that million. If some guy who was what we call a mechanic in the business, these guys all know how to manipulate. If some employee just gets bored sitting there, and just wants

to have a little fun and cheat somebody, you might lose a million dollars. So you can bet that those eyes in the sky were there to protect the public, not to just ignore them. They wanted to be *darn* sure that there was nobody getting cheated by the house, because you always had the people from the Gaming Control Board and their auditors and their detectives walking you through; they could come down through the place anytime they wanted to. If one of these guys just wanted to have a little fun or wanted to cheat, the guy in the eye in the sky got him, and, boy, he was gone, and I mean *really* gone.

What kind of training did these men on the walkways get?

Oh, all of them were old gamblers. They all knew the game.

Now, in the record it says that you were active in the National Association of Gaming Attorneys. What was that organization, and how has it evolved over the years?

It actually was just a group of the hotels and their managers, and they got together and basically would discuss their problems, like any other business. It was a business meeting of the people in the gaming industry just to talk about how the business was going, what they could do to help the business, and what they could do to promote the community, and those types of things.

I see. Did they have a regulatory function, like the Bar Association does? If some attorney was doing something he shouldn't have, would the association have stepped in?

Well, I don't recall any particular situation where they got after anybody. No.

You were licensed to practice before the United States Supreme Court.

Yes.

Did you actually conduct cases before the United States Supreme Court?

No, I never did. I was admitted to the Supreme Court, as you know, but I never ever took a case to the Supreme Court. I was just admitted—that and the United States Court of Military Appeals.

Tell me about that. How does the Court of Military Appeals work, and what was your relationship with it?

My relationship with it was simply that I was a staff judge advocate at Nellis. Somebody said that you should make an application and be admitted to court, in case you ever *need* to go. I never had to appear. Although it was an honor to be admitted, I just never had a case in front of the Military Court of Appeals.

You obviously had many contacts with other attorneys locally. You probably have known most of the people that have practiced law here in the last fifty years, or at least know about them.

Well, yes. I knew so many of them.

I assume that, as time has passed, the professional environment and the social atmosphere have evolved; things have changed. How would you say the practice of law is different now than it was forty or fifty years ago when you were starting out?

Well, I think one of the big changes is that in those days you knew everybody very, very

well. In those days, if you had a case, and you were really busy and couldn't get an answer out, you'd call up the person who was on the other side and say, "Hey," you know, "Joe, can I have a two-week continuance on filing my answer in this case? I'm busy as heck and can't get it on." That was it. You never filed it. Maybe once in a while, if it was somebody you knew, you might file it. [laughter] But I'll say nine times out of ten you never made a motion to the court. You didn't even file a stipulation.

He said, "Herb, you got the continuance," and that was your continuance.

Nowadays, I don't think that's as prevalent. I think what you do is file a formal document to get it before the courts that you've got a continuance. So you knew everyone, and you knew all about them, and there was a great respect for each other, I would say. But today, with several thousand lawyers, you can't know each other like that. It's no fault of the present people; it's just the lack of being able to know each other so well—getting in court and fighting it out.

It was kind of a funny situation, because all of us lawyers—the ones I knew and the ones that we practiced against—were advocates; I mean, very, very strong advocates. You looked like you were going to get into fistfights when you got into court. You really were in there to represent your client, and you were vigorously representing your client. You'd finish the hearing, and the lawyer on the other side, say, Mike Hines or whoever it might be, might say, "Herb, let's go get a cup of coffee." And we walk out and go over to Melody Lane and have a cup of coffee.

Your client is looking and thinking, "Oh, my," you know. [laughter] "That's the lawyer on the other side, and old Herb's going over to have a cup of coffee with him!"

Well, that was just typical. You knew each other so well that you had to associate with

each other. Otherwise, you never had any friends or would never talk about it. But it just never entered anybody's mind in those days—the ethics were not even *considered*. I have an expression from those days, and I guess it still should be the rule, that when you took a case—I don't care if it was a \$10,000 case or a \$100 case—if you took that \$100 case, it was just like an illegitimate child. It was yours no matter what. You worked that \$100 case just as hard as you worked that \$10,000 case, because he was an ugly, little guy, but he was all yours.

That was a saying among the lawyers in those days, "That was your ugly, little guy." That's the way we learned to practice law in my day. I can't say it any better than that.

We are talking about how the practice of law has changed, and I'm sure that, as you have observed, the nature of your firm here and the culture of the organization must have changed some as the years have passed, and as you've grown larger and larger. Could you talk a little about this firm? I know that you have branches in other parts of the state, also, and I'm not sure it's clear to me and those who will be listening just how you're configured.

Well, frankly, I don't think it's changed very much. We built this firm on the basis that if a person went to law school and graduated from law school and was admitted to the practice of law; that when you interviewed him and decided that you wanted him to be one of your associates—and you didn't hire associates that you didn't eventually hope to make a partner out of—that your attitude towards those people was that they were attorneys; that they were honorable, and that you treated them with respect and kind of like a family. They all belong to each other. This was kind of the theory that we built

this firm on, and, as far as I'm concerned, and from what I see—I'm not, of course, extremely active—but I *really* feel that it still has that same feeling of camaraderie; that we're comrades, that we respect each other, and if you didn't, you wouldn't be here. And I don't see any change, although, you know, we started out a firm of five guys from 1972 or whatever it was, and now we're several hundred. The attitude: I look around, and it seems to me like it's exactly the same. At least, I'm hoping so, because that is still my feeling about a law firm. You shouldn't have him in there if you didn't respect him to start with, and you shouldn't keep him in there if you still didn't respect him and make a friend out of him. That's the best I can explain it.

How many branch offices do you have around the state?

Just the two—Reno and Las Vegas.

I'm assuming that's a pretty large concern up there, also.

Yes. There's fifteen or better, with all their assistants. It's a big outfit, too. I got them all there on a list.

In terms of managing the internal operations of the office, do you have a regular meeting structure where all the attorneys come together?

I don't. Gary Goodheart is what we call the managing partner. Then we have other committees, and when you're as big as we are, you have to have committees. Then, of course, we have personnel managers. We have a general manager. It's run like a business. But we do have all kinds of committees. We have committees that work with the litigation

group, and you have the real estate group, and everybody has different groups.

I realize you were working very hard on the law most of the time.

No, I'm not. I don't want to mislead you. I don't work very hard. [laughter] I'm just here!

Well, over the years, what kinds of community activities did you get involved in? Did you join clubs, churches, and things like that?

Well, to be real frank with you, I was what is known as a "joiner." But remember, we're talking about fifty-seven years, so I haven't been active in anything for a number of years. But at one time or the other I belonged to the Lions Club; I belonged to the Rotary Club; I belonged to the YMCA. I was active in the Boy Scouts of America, because I had these five sons, and I was very active in that for a number of years. Then I was on the board for many years after that, but didn't participate.

Back in the early days in 1909, a Presbyterian Church was incorporated here and went out of business in 1911. My wife was a Presbyterian, and they wanted to start a Presbyterian Church, so I became active in the Presbyterian Church, and, at that time, as I became very active in the church, I messed up my golf on Sunday morning. [laughter] But I did participate in that for a long time and was very active in starting the Presbyterian Church here in Las Vegas. This is one of things that always made me angry when I talked to people who talked about "sin city." At one time the Presbyterian Church was the fastest-growing church in the United States, and they have several Presbyterian Churches here now, but I was active in what they called the First Presbyterian Church, which is the first one here.

Another thing I used to get angry with about this “sin city” business, at one time we had probably more Eagle Scouts in the Boy Scouts of America than most any other place. So, you know, when you start figuring we had tremendous church growth and tremendous attendance in churches and very, very active Boy Scouts and so forth, you used to get a little angry when somebody talked about you and your “sin city.” [laughter]

Had you been a Boy Scout yourself as a young person?

No. I was working. When I was a boy, I was selling newspapers. But because of my sons I got active in it.

Now, you were a member of the Rotary Club of Las Vegas?

At one time, yes. That was for a number of years. Then I had to quit because I was just so busy. My conscience got to hurting me. At that time we had a Rotary Club out here, which was the one on the Strip. We used to meet in one of the hotels here. Then when I was still in there, we had one out at Henderson, and we had one in North Las Vegas, maybe. But anyway, I was so terribly busy and worked so hard, that I couldn't get to the meetings. If you're a Rotarian, you're very conscious of the fact you're tearing down their reputation because, you know, that's one of the big things, is their meetings. I'd have to go. I spent more time out in Henderson or North Las Vegas than I did at my regular club, so finally I just submitted my resignation, because it wasn't being fair to the club.

Did you ever hold any offices in that club?

No, I did not.

You talked about the fact that the practice of law had a significant influence on your family life in that you couldn't talk about a lot of what you did during the day. At a more general level, what would you say that the impact of your career as a lawyer has been on your social life and your family life?

Oh, well, of course, in the early days and for many, many years, it had a big effect on it, because you played bridge with groups, and there'd be lawyers and doctors. Those were the professional people, so you associated with professional people in your bridge playing and your tennis thing and your golf and this type of thing. It had some effect on your life. I think that, you know, professional people in the older days, when there were not too many of you, had a tendency to bind together.

Sure, and see each other. Well, I've asked you most of my questions. I wonder what I have failed to ask you that you'd like to get on the record here before we cut off our interview.

See, I think you've asked about everything there is. Well, I've given you my grandparents and my parents and my siblings. I've told you about my childhood, told you about my colleges. I've told you about the community, told you about law school. I've gone into some of the career as a lawyer, work habits. All I can say about the work habits is that for many, many years we worked harder than we do now. I think I told you how we started out working six days a week, and then we went to a half day on Saturday, and now, of course, as far as I'm concerned, I practically do nothing, but I'm here. That's about all I can say.

We've talked about the firm. We've talked about the fact that in those days I was a corporate lawyer because I worked for the bank, and I worked for the Titanium Metals,

and I worked for BMI, and I did a lot of those kinds of things.

Well, it's been a very, very interesting interview.

I'm giving you my time.

All right. I appreciate so much your spending the time with us. This has been very useful.

You asked me for it, and you've been so gracious. I really appreciate how gracious you've been.

My pleasure. Always glad to talk to one of the senior residents of Las Vegas.

